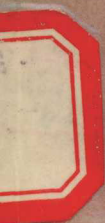


English through reading

Teacher's Manual



English Through Reading

TEACHER'S MANUAL

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Teaching Procedures

The writing of teaching materials requires the assumption of certain teaching procedures, which in turn imply notions about a learning model.

The learning model we have had in mind includes the belief that the subconscious process of learning a language is active when the learner's mind is consciously engaged in intellectually challenging tasks, which call for the use of language.

We have tried to provide such challenge through tasks concerned with the extraction, organization and expression of meaning (in the Comprehension and Composition exercises) and through certain problem-solving activities (in the exercises on Vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation and Spelling).

This means that the teaching procedures followed in the classroom should be at least such that they do not deprive the student of the opportunity to meet the challenge on his own. Teacher-centred procedures, such as explaining the text in detail or dictating summaries and essays, in effect deny such opportunities to students. What we have envisaged is a set of student-centred procedures, where the teacher progressively transfers the work to the students and generally occupies himself with organizing classroom work in such a way that each student does his best in working out the exercises, and receives encouragement, supervision and help when they are needed. It is of course necessary for the teacher to be thoroughly familiar with the exercises as well as the text, and he should be able to devise further exercises, where necessary, on the specific points of weakness of his own students, in, say, grammar, pronunciation or spelling.

With these general considerations in mind, we offer the following suggestions on particular aspects of a lesson.

1. Introducing a Passage

This should take the minimum amount of time, generally not more than ten or fifteen minutes. It is neither necessary nor possible to introduce all the difficult words that occur in the passage: the glossary is meant to take care of such difficulties and, wherever possible, the use of a dictionary should also be encouraged in the classroom. An introduction to the author of the passage is also, in most cases, irrelevant since the aim of the course is to focus attention on the meaning and language of the passage itself. Further, most students at this stage are unlikely to benefit from a knowledge of the biographical details of authors and, wherever students are likely to find such facts interesting and useful, it is better for the students themselves to gather them from standard reference books than for the teacher to hand the information out. Here, indeed, is a valuable opportunity to teach library-work of this kind.

What, then, should the introduction consist of? Perhaps some half-dozen words and expressions which are crucial to the understanding of the passage can be introduced, in as appropriate a context as can be created. Also, students can be given a general idea of what kind of situation or argument they will encounter in the passage. Talking about a parallel situation or argument is often a good way of doing it, since it is also likely to provide a suitable context for introducing the few words and expressions that are needed.

An introduction is not a 'must': if there is no need for an introduction, the teacher should be happy to skip it. Indeed, the aim should be to lead the class to a point where no introduction is necessary.

2. Reading the Passage

This should mean each student reading the passage silently by himself, not the teacher reading the passage aloud to the class. Reading aloud to the class can be used, from time to time, as an exercise in *listening* comprehension; it can also be done, *after* a passage has been studied, as practice in pronunciation. But reading for comprehension, which is a major skill to be taught through this course, involves silent reading by the students,

as almost all reading in real life does. If the student scan do the reading at home before they come to the class, a lot of time can be saved; if, however, this is not feasible, it is still worthwhile spending class-time on this important activity. Students should be encouraged to use the footnotes and refer to the glossary, as often as necessary, while reading the passage.

3. The Comprehension Exercises

Students are not expected, after a silent reading of the passage, to be able to answer all or most of the questions asked in the two comprehension exercises. It is, however, important that students make an effort to answer them and it is when students have been unable to answer a question that the teacher's explanation, simplification or elucidation is best given. We are, in other words, suggesting that explication of the passage by the teacher – a standard procedure in many places at present – be given up in favour of a detailed discussion of the answers to comprehension questions, since the latter serves the same purpose better and, in addition, gives the teacher some indication of the level of students' comprehension, on each passage.

Comprehension-I

Generally contains 'global' questions, which are meant to bring out an overall picture of what the passage contains and, in many cases, to reveal the logical or artistic organization of material in it. This exercise is better done question-by-question in class, with the teacher correcting, commenting and adding supplementary questions, as frequently as necessary. It is with this kind of work in mind that we have included some questions which contain or suggest answers to previous questions or require the same answer from a different point of view. Such repetitious questions should be directed to the weaker students in the class, as a means of reinforcing points that have already been made.

Comprehension-II

Contains the kind of 'local' questions that direct the students' attention to particular statements and suggestions, as well as to

Particular words and expressions, in the text. These questions are meant to be answered by students on their own, at a stretch. The teacher can then give out the answers and discuss those questions which appear to have puzzled or misled a large number of students.

In general, if the teacher finds a low level of comprehension in the class, he should proceed question-by-question, discuss each question in detail, direct attention to the part of the text that suggests the answer and add 'leading' questions wherever necessary. However, as soon as he feels that students can be left to tackle the question reasonably well on their own, he should leave them to do so and should confine his own work to checking their answers and commenting on their errors. The aim is gradually to reduce the dependence of students on the teacher, for reading a given passage with understanding.

4. The exercises on spelling/punctuation, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar

The following general procedure is recommended for each of these exercises.

- (a) The teacher makes sure, mainly by working out examples on the blackboard, that the students understand the job to be done.
- (b) The students then work on the exercise on their own and write down the answers in their note-books.
- (c) The teacher either calls out the right answers or writes them on the blackboard, and the students check their own answers (or check each other's answers, after exchanging note-books with their neighbours).
- (d) The teacher asks how many had all the answers right, how many made one mistake, and so on, in order to get an idea of students' performance. He can also ask, instead, who got the answer wrong to the first question, who to the second question, and so on, in order to find out which questions were found to be particularly difficult.
- (e) The teacher spends a little time explaining the answers to those questions which were of particular difficulty to the class.

Several minor variations on this procedure are possible and, in fact, desirable, if only for the sake of variety. The main part of the procedure is that, at some stage, students work on the exercise, decide on the answers and are told whether their answers are right or wrong.

In dealing with the pronunciation exercises, the teacher should clearly demonstrate the aspect of pronunciation involved – by sound, not just by symbol – and get at least a few students to imitate the right pronunciation individually. He can also get groups of students – sometimes the whole class – to repeat words or short sentences after him, with the right stress or rhythm. Further, students should be made to refer, whenever necessary, to the Key to Phonetic Symbols given in the course-book, so that they become familiar, after a time, with those symbols.

Similarly, in dealing with the spelling and vocabulary exercises, constant reference to the glossary should be encouraged. Such reference is not ‘cheating’—it is a legitimate use of the sources of information provided for the students’ use.

The use of a dictionary, such as *The Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current Usage*, (for information on pronunciation, spelling, meaning and a significant part of grammar) should also be encouraged and, where possible, prescribed.

These exercises have the aim of reinforcing the elements of language that contribute to the complex skills of reading, writing and speaking. They also offer remedial help on points which are believed to represent the common difficulties of learners of English as a second language. It is, however, more than likely that, for any given set of students, they do not cover all such points of difficulty and some of them deal with points which do not represent such difficulties. In such cases, the teacher has to devise his own exercises and use them either in addition to or in place of those given in the course-book. We recommend, however, that the teacher’s exercises be modelled on those in the course-book, at least in two respects: (i) the context of a passage already studied is used, in order to make the exercise meaningful; and (ii) theoretical explanation and technical terminology are kept to the absolute minimum.

5. The Composition Exercises

The teacher's main job here is to encourage students to write on their own, even if they make mistakes. Each exercise should be introduced briefly, the aim being simply to make sure that they understand what is to be done. The students should then be left to write on their own. They should be encouraged to review, revise or redraft their own written work. Those students who write fairly well should be asked to read their compositions to the rest of the class. It is neither possible nor necessary for the teacher to point out all the mistakes made by every student. It is, however, necessary to collect, from time to time, written work from a cross-section of the class and to look through it for *recurrent* errors. Such recurrent errors should then be pointed out to the whole class and a short exercise or two should be set on the point involved in each type of error. Sometimes, a typical paragraph written by an average student can be written up, as it is, on the blackboard (without revealing the name of its author), and corrections or improvements can be made in it, with the help of the whole class. In general, it is necessary to bear in mind that writing is a very complex skill which many educated people fail to acquire and that it is something of an adventure in which one needs a great deal of sympathy and encouragement.

6. The Answers

Many of the answers provided in this book can be worded in various other ways as well. The teacher should not, therefore, insist on his students giving their answers in exactly the form in which they are given here. In the comprehension exercises, any answer that contains the substance of the right answer should be accepted.

7. The time-factor

Where the teaching-hours set apart for prose alone do not provide enough time to go through all these exercises, the hours set apart for composition can be used for the composition exercises and those set apart for grammar used for the grammar, spelling and punctuation exercises given in the course-book.

Examinations

A. General Considerations

1. Relative importance of different parts

The teaching material provided in the course-book can be classified under two main heads:

- (i) *Skills* reading and writing
- (ii) *Elements of language* spelling, punctuation, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar

An achievement test at the end of the course should, accordingly, cover these particular skills and elements of language. The proportion of marks between the two can vary, but we recommend a 60:40 division—i.e. 60 marks for the two skills and 40 for the different elements.

Further sub-allocation of marks can be as follows:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----|
| (i) <i>Skills</i> | (a) Reading | 30 |
| | (b) Writing | 30 |
| (ii) <i>Elements of language</i> | (a) Vocabulary | 15 |
| | (b) Grammar | 10 |
| | (c) Pronunciation | 10 |
| | (d) Spelling + punctuation | 5 |

2. The form of questions

Two considerations are of particular importance in deciding on the form of questions:

- (i) Each question should really test what it intends to test, and, as far as possible, *should test only that skill or element*. This will make it possible, at the time of marking the answers,

to give a very high mark to the right answer and a very low one to the wrong answer. It will also enable the examining authority to collect relevant information on students' performance in respect of particular skills and elements and to re-design the examination paper from time to time in the light of such evidence.

(ii) Questions should not be predictable. Students should be made to reveal their real ability in respect of the particular skills or elements being tested. The predictability of questions can be lessened by (a) reducing the range of choice, and (b) setting questions that require very specific answers.

3. Content and difficulty-level of questions

Not all the questions need be of the same difficulty-level. There are, in fact, reasons for not making them uniform in this respect. One reason is related to the aims of the course itself. Where the primary purpose of teaching English is to give students access to books written in English, questions on reading comprehension should be much more difficult than, say, those requiring free composition. Secondly, where there is a classification of results, one wishes to get a wide spread of marks, rather than just a pass-or-fail decision. In such situations, one can set a few particularly difficult questions so that only those students who can answer them satisfactorily will be entitled to a First Class.

The content of a given question can be such that the answer to it is merely or largely a matter of memory; or a matter of exercising the skills acquired on given extracts, in the examination hall; or a matter of thinking and organizing, along the lines indicated.

B. The Pattern of a Paper

Bearing these facts in mind, we suggest the following pattern of questions, which can be used for a three-hour examination paper.

I. Writing

- (a) An essay of about 250 words (choice 1 out of 2). This is free composition, but the question is based on the textbook and should be specific in wording. 15 marks
- (b) A paragraph-long (about 100 words) piece of free composition which calls for imagination or intelligent organization. A short letter or an argument or a summary, *from a given point of view*, of a given passage (choice: 1 out of 2). 10 marks
- (c) A paragraph-long piece (about 100 words) of guided composition—the guidance given by a series of questions, or points, or hints in some other form (no choice). 5 marks

II. Reading

- (a) Two short extracts from the textbook with five objective comprehension questions on each. 10 marks
- (b) A longer extract (200-250 words) from the textbook with ten objective comprehension questions. 10 marks
- (c) An unseen passage of about 250 words and of roughly the difficulty-level of the last five passages in the textbook, with ten objective comprehension questions (twenty if they are true/false statements). 10 marks

III. Vocabulary

- (a) Explanation, by the student, of ten words or phrases printed in italics in given sentences taken from the textbook. This will be difficult and is meant to be so. 10 marks
- (b) Finding ten words for given meanings or matching ten words with given meanings. 5 marks

IV. Grammar

Two questions (blank-filling or correcting given

errors or changing given sentences in specified ways) on any two or more areas of grammar dealt with in the textbook.

2 × 5 marks

V. Pronunciation

- (a) Marking stress in ten given words. 5 marks
- (b) Marking sentence-stress and pause, or answering questions on particular sounds in words. 5 marks

VI. Spelling and Punctuation

- (a) Blank-filling or correcting errors in words. 3 marks
- (b) Punctuating a given extract. 2 marks

C. A Sample Question-Paper

Question I

- (a) Answer ONE of the following questions in a short essay of about 250 words. You are advised to make a rough draft, first, of your answer. —15 marks
- (i) J. B. S. Haldane says, in *The Laws of Nature*, 'It is quite probable that every law of Nature so far stated has been stated incorrectly.' How does he illustrate this statement? Does Haldane criticize or defend the laws of Nature, in that essay? How does the statement given above fit into his main argument?
- (ii) 'The elders gasped in surprise. Never before had a thing like this happened in Workers' Paradise—a thing that had no meaning and no purpose at all!' Who were the elders and what was the thing that happened, for the first time, in Workers' Paradise? Was it really meaningless and purposeless? In what sense?
- (b) Answer ONE of the following questions in about a hundred words. You are advised to make a rough draft, first. —10 marks
- (i) 'The story of that homeric fight got all round town, and

- some of our relatives looked upon the incident as a blot on the family name. They insisted that we get rid of Rex, but we were happy with him, and nobody could have made us give him up.' Imagine a meeting between James (Thurber) and one of his relatives. Write a short dialogue, showing what they might say to each other and what reasons they might give for it.
- (ii) Suppose you wished to show that the Nazi movement in Germany was made possible by certain sociological factors. What arguments or observations would you use, for that purpose, from the essay, *Work and Play*? Write a paragraph using all such arguments or observations.
- (c) *Describe, in a paragraph of about 100 words, the last part of the story, 'The Karburator'. Your answer should include the points raised by the following questions. It should, however, be a continuous paragraph, not just a series of unconnected sentences. —5 marks*
- Who suggested that Bondy should see the machine?
 Did Bondy agree to see it? Why?
 Did Marek go with Bondy? Why?
 Where was the machine?
 What did it look like?
 What happened to Bondy, in the cellar?
 Who rescued him? How?
 What does all this tell us about the machine itself?

Question II

- (a) *Read each of the following extracts carefully and then answer the questions that follow it. —2 × 5 marks*
- (i) 'It is more difficult to deal with the self-esteem of man as man, because we cannot argue out the matter with some non-human mind. The only way I know of dealing with this general human conceit is to remind ourselves that man is a brief episode in the life of a small planet in a little corner of the universe, and that for aught we know, other parts of the cosmos may contain beings as superior to ourselves as we are to jelly-fish.'

1. What is 'this general human conceit'?
2. Would it be good if we could 'argue out the matter with some non-human mind'?
3. Which is 'a small planet in a little corner of the universe'?
4. What words in this passage roughly mean 'in spite of what we think at present'?
5. Are we, in the author's opinion, definitely superior to jelly-fish?

(ii) 'If we wish to speak about larger and smaller infinities, we face a problem of comparing the numbers that we can neither name nor write down, and are more or less in the position of a Hottentot inspecting his treasure chest and wanting to know whether he has more glass beads or more copper coins in his possession. But, as you will remember, the Hottentot is unable to count beyond three. Then shall he give up all attempts to compare the number of beads and coins because he cannot count them? Not at all, if he is clever enough, he will get his answer by comparing the beads and the coins piece by piece.'

Choose the best alternative (a, b, c or d) under each question.

1. 'to speak about larger and smaller infinities' means, in this context,
 - (a) to describe the characteristics of infinite numbers.
 - (b) to compare the size of one infinite number with that of another.
 - (c) to find a way of naming and writing down each infinite number.
 - (d) to speak about finite numbers as well as infinite ones.
2. In what respect are we said to be 'in the position of a Hottentot'?
 - (a) Neither he nor we can compare infinities.
 - (b) He cannot name or write down big numbers just as we cannot name or write them down.
 - (c) He wishes to compare his glass beads with his copper coins, just as we wish to compare finite numbers with infinite ones.

(d) Neither he nor we can count the things which are to be compared.

3. 'But...the Hottentot is unable to count beyond three.' Which of the following can be put in place of 'but', in this sentence, without changing the meaning?

(a) Although he wishes to find out whether he has more beads or coins.

(b) Although we are more or less in the position of a Hottentot.

(c) Although he has only a small number of glass beads and copper coins.

(d) Although he can compare his glass beads with his copper coins.

4. 'he will get his answer...'

What is the question to which he will get the answer?

(a) 'Have I got more glass beads or copper coins?'

(b) 'Shall I give up all attempts to compare the number of beads and the number of coins?'

(c) 'Can I count beyond three?'

(d) 'How can I compare infinite numbers?'

5. 'Piece by piece' means

(a) by putting the pieces together.

(b) slowly and patiently.

(c) one by one.

(d) by breaking up the beads and coins.

(b) *Read the following extract carefully and then answer the questions that follow it.* —10 marks

'In her loneliness, Harriet was driven to adopt places; there was her cubbyhole under the stairs, and there was a place on the end of the jetty, the landing-stage by the house. Harriet liked to sit on the end of it, her legs hanging down, her back warmed with the sun, her ears filled with the cool gurgling of the water against the jetty poles.

"How is it a Secret Hole when it isn't a secret and it isn't a hole?" Valerie asked about the Secret Hole, but it still felt secret to Harriet, though she used the jetty for her more open thoughts. The flowing water helped her thoughts to